

Impacts of Alternative A: No Action

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Analysis

Archeological Resources. Under alternative A there would be no further development or construction. Therefore, potentials for disturbing intact archeological resources would be low. If ground-disturbing actions were to become necessary, NPS policies for identifying, evaluating, and, where possible, avoiding or mitigating damage to resources would be followed.

Cultural Landscape. Alternative A would have no impacts to the Vieux Carré cultural landscape or on other historical settings associated with New Orleans jazz.

Parades. Developing cooperative agreements to streamline the parade permit process and obtaining financial support to defray parade costs would remove or reduce some of the growing barriers to parading. This would benefit this important tradition by making it easier for participating groups to organize and conduct parades. However, these actions would be taken only as funding permitted.

Communities, Historic Structures, and Landmarks. Developing a cultural resource data base and resource management plan, as funding permitted, would help locate, preserve, and maintain resources by identifying management needs and by establishing priorities.

Completing the NHL theme study, as funding permitted, would benefit preservation efforts by identifying properties having landmark status and defining the qualities that make them significant.

Continuing to emphasize the preservation of historic jazz sites and structures would benefit the resources by helping to maintain their integrity. Renovating and adaptively using structures could provide more locations for

jazz performances or education, which would help ensure the continued maintenance and use of these structures.

The renovation of historic structures could result in adverse impacts such as the loss of historic fabric. However, the use of replica or historically compatible replacement fabric, construction methods, and other preservation techniques would minimize or mitigate these impacts (see NPS 1990d for guidance).

Developing partnerships to continue research, collect oral histories, and make archives accessible to researchers would continue to yield information needed for managing resources and establishing their historical contents. However, these actions would take place only as current operational funding levels permitted. The status quo levels of funding would prevent an aggressive approach to historic preservation, which would result in the deterioration or loss of historic fabric and the loss of historical informants due to attrition.

Conclusions

Cultural resources would benefit minimally. Damage to archeological sites would be avoided. The parade tradition would be supported. Preserving historic properties would be emphasized.

Current operational funds and staffing would be insufficient to prevent significant negative impacts to some jazz cultural resources.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Implementing alternative A would cause no adverse impacts to natural resources.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Analysis

Access, Circulation, and Parking. Continuing to rely on the existing transportation infrastructure and park facilities would afford visitors cost-effective ways to access and circulate through the park, especially in the Vieux Carré area.

Depending on self-guided auto and commercial bus tours would permit some visitor access to activities and sites outside of the Vieux Carré. Touring sites outside of the Vieux Carré by foot would continue to be difficult since many of the resources are scattered throughout the city.

Interpretation. Continuing not to have a centralized and easily accessible visitor center would limit the park's ability to provide interpretive services and would restrict direct contact between the park interpretive staff and visitors. Limited staffing and funding would only allow the basic history of jazz to be conveyed.

Pursuing limited partnerships with other entities would slightly increase interpretive opportunities, but these would not always be in the direct control of the National Park Service. Interpretive opportunities would be available through partners. Participating in special events such as Jazz Fest would enhance the visitor experience for some individuals, but these events would emphasize performance, rather than interpretation.

Education. Supporting non-NPS educational activities through partnerships would continue to benefit young musicians and students. Targeting selected audiences (such as low-income or those with little previous experience in music) would allow disadvantaged audiences to have greater access to jazz instruction. However, there would be little direct control over program quality. NPS objectives would be met by the selection of partners and negotiation over program content

and guidelines, rather than by direct program design and quality assurance. Working closely with the New Orleans Jazz Commission would help coordinate these activities and maintain partnerships.

Visitor Services. Continuing to provide visitor services such as orientation, restroom facilities, and visitor safety and protection through non-NPS entities could limit the quality of the visitor experience. Providing orientation and visitor information through limited personal and nonpersonal media would not convey the full range of jazz opportunities. There would not be a single location to serve as a focal point for jazz-related information and programs. Some visitors would continue to be unaware of the park and its purpose. The lack of coordinated visitor services would reduce the potential for a high-quality visitor experience for many individuals.

Carrying Capacity. Although no carrying capacity data exists for the park, some park service-sponsored events might create limited crowding, traffic, congestion, or intrusions into local communities. These adverse impacts would be localized, short in duration, and infrequent.

Conclusions

The visitor experience would benefit minimally. There would be no impacts to current visitor access, circulation, or parking, because they would remain the same as current conditions.

Interpretive services would benefit slightly from gradual increases in funding. Jazz education could receive moderate benefits, depending on staffing, funding, and NPS priorities, and on the selection of quality partners.

The Park Service would not be in direct control of visitor services, which could adversely impact the quality of the visitor experience.

The park would not be able to fulfill its interpretation and education goals, and thus its mission, due to limited staffing and funding.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Analysis

The current development and annual operation budget of \$612,000 would have a negligible impact to the local economy. Continuing the status quo funding levels would allow only basic park programs and operations to be carried out. The low level of operations and minimal budget and staff would prevent the fulfilling the park's mission. The expectations of Congress and the public, including the local community, other New Orleans residents, and the jazz community and jazz fans would not be met because the park would be unable to completely fulfill its mission.

Since New Orleans, with its many attractions (including the Vieux Carré), is already a destination for large numbers of tourists, and there is already a thriving tourism industry in New Orleans, the park would not be expected to draw large numbers of additional visitors to the New Orleans region. Many visitors might not even know that the park existed prior to their visit to New Orleans. However, drawing upon the numerous visitors that come to the Vieux Carré, it would be expected that large numbers of visitors would visit the park (albeit probably for a short duration of time) and many regional residents would be exposed to park-supported programs related to jazz. The park might enhance business opportunities in the immediate vicinity of North Rampart Street by attracting more tourists to this portion of the Vieux Carré and the nearby neighborhood.

Relatively few individuals and firms would benefit economically from the development and operation of New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, although these benefits might be significant for those affected. The overall dollar impact would be minimal because of the

large size of the New Orleans regional economy.

Continuing a National Park Service presence would have positive social impacts for park visitors and for the local community by drawing some attention to and legitimizing the historical significance of New Orleans jazz.

Conclusions

A relatively few individuals and firms would benefit economically from the development and annual operating budget of \$612,000. The park might stimulate business activities in certain areas of the Vieux Carré area. Jazz events, developed through partnerships, might increase visitor spending. However, compared to the existing volume tourism and associated spending, these increases would be nominal.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Analysis

Retaining the park headquarters on Canal Street and continuing to share support services with Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve would limit the park's ability to carry out its function. There would be no centralized visitor center/administration facility beyond a small, staffed information area and administrative offices. Office and storage space would remain insufficient. The presence of the National Park Service, and the park, would be overshadowed by the surrounding environment. This would inhibit the park's ability to make an impact and limit its role in interpreting jazz resources, educating the public, and preserving jazz-related resources, and therefore, its mission.

Gradual increases in park operating funds would have a negligible benefit on park administration and operations.

Conclusions

Park administration and operations would negligibly benefit from gradual increases in funding through time. The increases would be insufficient for the park to fully achieve its mission.

PARTNERSHIPS

Analysis

Developing partnerships would not be a priority. Partnerships relating to jazz performances, events, and educational programs would be sought and maintained as funding permitted and would continue to moderately benefit the park's visitor experience.

Conclusions

Partnerships would have minimal to moderate beneficial effects on park activities.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Currently, the understanding and appreciation of jazz and the jazz heritage is being promoted

by the National Park Service, schools, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and other governmental entities. This is resulting in an enhanced awareness of this musical art form. Alternative A would continue this process.

The efforts of the Park Service and other preservation partners to help preserve neighborhoods and sites associated with early jazz might be enough to outweigh the outside forces of change, decay, and decisions by individual owners that threaten these fragile areas, although the overall negative impacts from growth, development, and the effects of aging might still result in a loss of tangible resources related to early jazz history.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

The level of funding and staffing would prevent aggressive historical research and preservation of historic structures. Significant historic structures would not be identified and many would deteriorate, possibly vanishing from the historic scene. Informants with firsthand knowledge of jazz and its evolution would be lost through attrition.